



We recommend meats and other animal products such as dairy and eggs to be:

- **humanely treated;**
- **naturally raised;**
- **grass-fed, grass-finished, and/or pasture raised.**

Responsible production of meats and other animal products creates a healthy life for animals, people, and the environment. Animals with direct access to pastures are less stressed compared to those in confined and crowded facilities and are not as susceptible to disease outbreaks. The benefits of less stress are passed on to the consumer as an increase in “good fats” such as CLA and a decrease in cholesterol.

Raising animals naturally with access to pastures improves wildlife populations and habitat and aquatic environments because of the decreased demand for grain crops and fertilizer.

“These lands provide opportunities for improved nutrient management from land application of animal manure and other by-product nutrient sources, reduces soil erosion from wind and water, reduces potential for flooding, less sediment in streams and reservoirs, and has a major impact on economic and social stability in rural communities,” (USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service).

Definitions adopted from the Southern Maryland Meats Program:

Humane treatment: The animals have proper facilities with clean and sufficient food and water, shelter, a resting area, and company of their own kind. The animals live in an appropriate and comfortable environment that includes sufficient space with appropriate access to the outdoors and pasture. Animals are also humanely transported and slaughtered.

Naturally Raised: Meets the following conditions

1. No growth hormones were administered to the animals
2. No antibiotics were administered to the animal (except to prevent parasitism)
3. No animal by-products were fed to the animals

Grass-fed: The animal's diet consists solely of grass and/or forage throughout its lifetime. These animals are not fed grain and must have continuous access to pasture during the growing season.

Grass-finished: Grass finished cattle are fattened on grass only. Finishing is a term that defines the process of fattening cattle for the last few months before processing.

Pasture Raised: Animals spend their lives outdoors, on pastures. Animals forage for significant portions of their diets.